



## Putting the Pieces Together for Successful Handwriting & Academic Skills: Fine Motor Coordination



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Many children are referred to occupational therapy for difficulties with handwriting skills. Teachers and parents express concern with a child's pencil grasp or that he/she struggles with placement of letters on the line. It may also be noted that the child often writes letters and numbers backwards or that he/she incorrectly forms the letters.

Teachers depend on written work to measure how well a child is learning. The development of a child's handwriting can provide clues to developmental problems that could hinder a child's learning in the classroom. Difficulty with the components of handwriting often go unnoticed early on and result in more obstacles in the future. An occupational therapist can determine which components are difficult for a child, and work closely with teachers and parents to help treat these concerns.

### WILL A PENCIL GRIP CHANGE MY CHILD'S PENCIL GRASP?

Fine motor coordination is the most recognized piece of the puzzle by parents and teachers. Many of them believe that an improper pencil grasp is the sole reason for poor handwriting skills. Although an efficient pencil grasp is important, quality handwriting is not exclusive to one type. A pencil grasp can be efficient as long as the movement of the pencil is produced by the intrinsic muscles of the hand. An occupational therapist can determine if a pencil grip is needed for a child. Many grips can make a child more awkward when writing or not have an impact in changing a child's grasp at all.

## FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES

Regardless if a pencil grip is used, fine motor coordination must be addressed! As always, we encourage this component to be addressed through PLAY! Here are some great activities for teachers and parents to use in the classroom and at home:

- Use tongs and cotton balls and a number line to practice counting and addition
- To learn about measurement, use eye droppers and a measuring cup to move colored water
- Put capital letters on clothespins. Have child clip clothespin to matching lowercase letter on a card
- Squeeze a bulb syringe to race cotton balls
- Hide objects, such as coins or beads, in playdough or putty and have your child use fingers to dig them out
- Use a tack to connect the dots on a piece of paper taped to foam mat
- Board games, such as The Sneaky, Snacky Squirrel Game® and Operation
- Learning Resources® Super Sorting Pie
- Manipulate coins from finger to palm and palm to finger to put in bank



Please let us know if you have questions regarding this information! We would be more than happy to explain anything above in more detail!

Thanks so much!

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All for the Kids Therapy Services

*Inspiring your kids to continue to learn and grow!*